



# HGDPC

Historic Gloria Dei (Old Swedes')  
Preservation Corporation

## *The Life and Times of Andris Souplis*



# A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

By Candace Roberts



Candace Roberts,  
Chair of the Board

This issue of *Founders Magazine* takes us from the founding of Germantown to the consecration of Gloria Dei Church to Bartram's Garden becoming a National Historic Landmark. We learn about the Souplis family, spanning from their emigration to America to becoming landowners and naturalized citizens. The Souplis story is one of the many that give us insights into the growth of the region. Initially coming here to be free of religious persecution, these families built communities and industries. And, we know from many sources, that they worked with the Lenape to build commerce and prosperity.

In the Philadelphia region, we greatly benefit from access to Bartram's Garden. The descendants of Andris Souplis left their mark at Gloria Dei, but also a marvelous gift that we all enjoy today.

The Gloria Dei connection to Bartram's Garden is especially fitting as we embark on our master plan to create a woodland at Gloria Dei. As many of you know, Gloria Dei Church is adjacent to a National Park. The National Park Service applied for a cultural land survey to be completed on the property. This process will tell us what is under the ground. Once we have the report, we will be able to plan our woodland space. Those of us living in and near Philadelphia are well aware that the tree canopy has been in steady decline. It is our understanding that the report will be available in early 2022. We are excited to work with local and state governments in bringing a significant green space to south Philadelphia!

We are undertaking this project simultaneously with fundraising for a new roof on the church in 2026. We hope that either or both of these projects will be a cause worthy of your support! Please consider a gift today.

Respectfully submitted,  
Candace Roberts, Chair of the Board



**About the Author:** Andrew Supplee graduated from Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania with degrees in English and city planning. He was employed as a township and county planner in Pennsylvania, worked with John Heinz III on the U.S. Senate campaign of Minority Leader Hugh Scott and was field coordinator for President Ford's campaign in Philadelphia. Besides being interested in his immigrant ancestor, he is currently writing on 19th century Missouri River historic sites which have drawn him to research in states along the river since 1991.

*The article that appears in this magazine was excerpted from "Andris Souplis, 1634-1726, immigrant to Germantown, PA" by the author.*

*It was edited by Amy Grant. To read the full article with references, please visit: [www.preserveoldswedes.org/souplis-history](http://www.preserveoldswedes.org/souplis-history).*

*On the cover: "Autumn Afternoon, the Wissahickon" by Thomas Moran (1864).*



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## FOUNDERS MAGAZINE

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This article is pertinent to the founding of Germantown, Pennsylvania by Dutch, German and French Mennonite, Quaker and Huguenot immigrants who settled there beginning in 1683. Andris Souplis (1634-1726) was a French Huguenot, a weaver, the first sheriff of Germantown, and the progenitor of the Supplees in America. He was buried at Gloria Dei Church in Philadelphia.

The article attempts to identify Andris' close associates in order to discover the following basic unknowns:

- 1) his immigration to America and 2) the family name of Anneke, his first wife.

Andris was born about 1634 in the Alsace-Lorraine Province of France. His family were said to be Huguenots (Reformed Protestants). Huguenots were openly critical of the Catholic Church, and hostilities between these religious groups led to major civil unrest. In the 1680s, Huguenots faced heavy persecution by the French monarchy; they were forced to convert to Catholicism or become refugees. A number of Huguenots fled to Holland for safety; Andris was likely among them.

Shortly after arriving in Holland, Andris met and married his first wife, Anneke. This research suggests that she may have been Anneken Keyser, born of the Keyser family in Amsterdam. Anneken is mentioned in a Keyser family genealogy as having died in 1681. A historian suggested that in genealogical histories if a known family member was lost in the historical record, that person might simply have been claimed to have died. Such might be the case with Anneken.

While Holland offered political asylum to Huguenot immigrants, they were not given full rights as citizens. Perhaps this is why Andris and Anneke migrated to Pennsylvania.

## THE FOUNDING OF GERMANTOWN

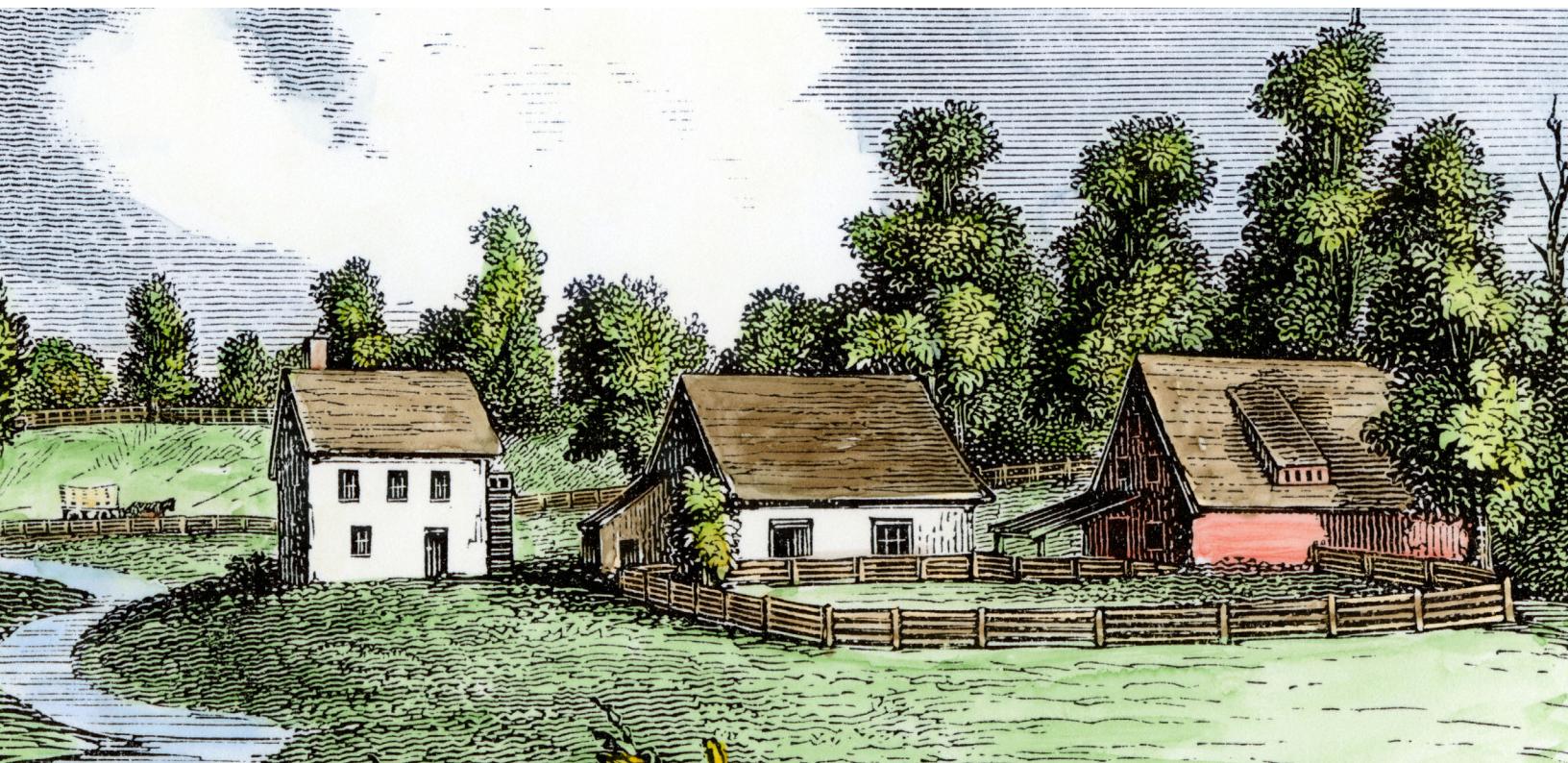
In 1681, King Charles II of England granted William Penn over 45,000 square miles of land located west of New Jersey and north of Maryland. The area was named Pennsylvania, after Penn's father, to whom the King owed a debt. This land grant made Wil-

liam Penn the world's largest private landowner. He was a Quaker who was jailed many times for his beliefs. An early advocate of democracy and religious freedom, Penn envisioned Pennsylvania as a "holy experiment" and a political utopia. These ideals appealed to fellow Quakers, Mennonites, Lutherans, Pietists and other groups who had faced persecution in Europe.

Penn also hoped that Pennsylvania would be a profitable venture for himself and his family. To attract settlers in large numbers, he wrote a glowing prospectus about Pennsylvania's material advantages. Within six months he had parceled out 300,000 acres to over 250 prospective settlers. In 1682, Dirck Sipman, a merchant of Krefeld, in the county of Meurs on the border of Germany, acquired 5,000 of Penn's acres.

Sipman himself never emigrated to America. Instead, he subdivided his landholdings and sold plots to several Mennonite and Quaker families who were based in the Krefeld area. In 1683, for example, he sold 200 acres to Jan Siemens, a linen weaver.

Meanwhile, another group seeking refuge, called the German or Frankfurt Society, sought a permanent settlement in Pennsylvania. They hired attorney Francis Daniel Pastorius to negotiate with William Penn on their behalf. Pastorius arrived in Philadelphia aboard the *America* in August 1683.



(Above) The Shoemaker farm, the first farm in Germantown, as depicted in the early 1700s.  
(Inset) Reproduction of the 1691 Germantown Seal designed by Francis Daniel Pastorius.



A few months later, the ship *Concord* brought 13 families from Krefeld, Germany, including Siemens and his wife Merkje Williams Lukens. Upon arriving in Philadelphia, they probably found temporary shelter near the Delaware River. Although the Krefelders had purchased land, their individual plots had not been assigned prior to their arrival. They soon became acquainted with Pastorius, who agreed to represent their interests.

Pastorius negotiated directly with William Penn on behalf of the German Society and the Krefelders. Penn eventually agreed to grant 5,700 acres for 'the German Township,' an independent

municipality six miles northwest of Philadelphia. The Krefelders' plots were placed adjacent to this township and became part of this new German settlement in America. On Oct. 25, 1683, the Krefelders gathered at Pastorius' house at present Front and Nau-dian Streets and drew lots for their new homes. These individual parcels were laid out on both sides of an old Native American trail.

Andris Souplis was not among Germantown's first purchasers, but he was an early settler and became an important leader in the community.

## 1696

Anneke probably dies. Andris sells Lot #18 in Germantown to Christian Warmer.



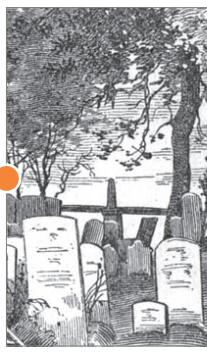
## 1707

In March, Andris and his sons acquire 50 acres on the Schuylkill River in present Upper Merion. A year later, they acquire another 100 acres.



## 1697

Andris marries Gertrude Mansson Enochson, a congregant of the Wicaco Church.



## 1739

In April, Andris' son Andrew sells the Kingsessing land to renowned botanist John Bartram.



## 1942

Gloria Dei (Wicaco) Church is designated a National Historic Site on Nov. 17th.



## 1711

**1697**  
In March, Andris acquires 50 acres in Aronameck from Peter Yocum.

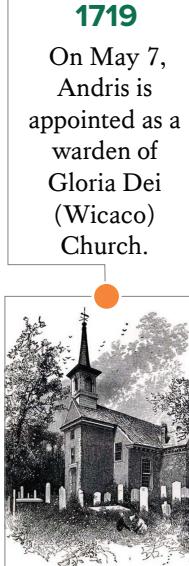


## 1722



## 1700

On Jun. 2, the new Wicaco church building is consecrated; Andris and Gertrude are likely in attendance.



## 1733

**1719**  
On May 7, Andris is appointed as a warden of Gloria Dei (Wicaco) Church.



## 1738

Gertrude dies and is buried at Gloria Dei (Wicaco) Church with her late husband.

## 1744

**1904**  
Andris' former land in Upper Merion becomes the site of the Swedes' Furnaces.



## 1755

**1960**  
Bartram's Garden, North America's oldest surviving botanical garden, becomes a National Historic Landmark.

In a document entitled "Beschreibung Pennsylvania," dated October 1685, Pastorius described additional settlers who were in Germantown or on their way there. This included Andreas (sic) Souplis, William Ruttinghuysen and Dirck Keyser, Jr.

Dirck Keyser, Jr., Anneke's brother, was born in 1635 in Amsterdam. He was a silk merchant and a Mennonite who arrived in Germantown by way of New York in 1688. Andris and the Germantown Keyers were very close. Dirck Jr. often served as a witness when Andris purchased and sold land. Andris' daughter Margaret married Dirck Jr.'s son Peter.

William Ruttinghuysen moved with this family from New York to Germantown in 1688. He was a Mennonite minister from Brioch, Holland. The next door neighbor of Andris, he built the first paper mill on a branch of the Wissahickon Creek. Part of his lot in Germantown became the site of the stone Mennonite Meeting House and cemetery in 1714. David Rittenhouse (1732–1796), his great-grandson, was a noted astronomer, inventor, clockmaker, mathematician, surveyor, scientific instrument craftsman, and public official. Rittenhouse Square in Center City Philadelphia is named in David's honor.



(Above) The Rittenhouse Paper Mill (date unknown).

## FIRST SHERIFF OF GERMANTOWN

Although we do not have a record of Andris sailing across the Atlantic, he was admitted a "burgher" (inhabitant) and "denizen" of New York City in September 1685. Denization bestowed upon a foreigner the status of being a subject of the English monarch. His name also appears on a list of French immigrants who left New York in the early 1690s. Traveling with him were Gerrit Hendricks de Wees and his wife. Lamber Gerrits, their son, would apprentice under Andris in October of 1692.

We don't know why Andris moved to Germantown. Perhaps it was because his brother-in-law, Dirck Keyser, Jr., had recently settled there. Or it could be that an opportunity presented itself. Jan Siemens, one of the original Krefeld purchasers, died shortly after he arrived in Pennsylvania. The 200 acres he owned in Germantown descended to his heirs: his wife Merkje Williams Lukens and her new husband William Strepers. Andris acquired this property in 1686 and began paying ground rent in 1690. The original deed is said to survive in the archives of the Germantown Historical Society.

In the 1690s, Andris became an active and important member of the Germantown community. Along with Dirck Keyser Jr., he was naturalized and made a freeman in May 1691. This gave Andris the same rights that a natural-born subject possessed, retroactively from the time of his birth. This also allowed him to be elected into office.

Most of the Krefeld emigrants were weavers who had little interest in holding public office positions. They would do little but work and pray and their consciences made them opposed to swearing "oaths and courts." Many even refused to use harsh weapons against thieves and trespassers. Andris does not appear to have shared these views. The first officials of Germantown's General Court were elected in 1691. Francis Daniel Pastorius was elected both Bailiff and Treasurer. Dirck Keyser, Jr. was elected Overseer of the Ways and Overseer of the Fences. Andris was elected Sheriff as well as Sergeant, or Crier, of the Court. He held the position of Sheriff for a year.

Andris had also become a successful weaver in Germantown. By 1692, he had apprentices. That year, he also exchanged land with a neighbor, perhaps to support his growing business.

By 1696, both Germantown and Aronomeck (in Kingsessing Township) had established commercial weaving industries. An-

dris' daughter Ann had moved to Aronameck when she married into the Yocum family. Perhaps this is why Andris moved there. In March 1697, Andris acquired 50 acres in Aronameck from Ann's father-in-law, Peter Yocum. This property fronted the Schuylkill River. Today it is part of Bartram's Garden.

While the move may have offered new business opportunities, it was not without tragedy. Anneke, Andris' beloved partner and mother of his children, died around this time.

Aronameck was home to a number of Lutheran settlers who worshiped at the Wicaco Church. By March 1697, Andris had met and married one of these congregants. Gertrude [Enochson or Stressinger or Mansoon] was born about 1650 in Sweden. She was married four times to:

1. Garrett Enochs;
2. Harman Enochs (Garrett's brother);
3. Lasse Bartilson;
4. Andris Souplis.

Perhaps because of this marriage, Andris began worshiping at the Wicaco Church. It was an exciting time for the congregation. The blockhouse that had been used for worship since 1677 was being replaced by the brick edifice that still stands today in South Philadelphia. Andris and Gertrude very likely attended the consecration service for the brick church on Jun. 2, 1700. This event attracted many from all over the Philadelphia area and some from as far as Delaware. William Penn, Pennsylvania's governor, is said to have been in attendance. The church was christened "Gloria Dei," meaning Glory to God.

Andris expanded his landholdings in 1707 with the purchase of 50 acres in Upper Merion. The following year, he purchased an additional 100 acres there. Two of his sons lived on these properties.

Later in life, Andris became a leader at Gloria Dei Church. On May 7, 1719, he was appointed to the position of church warden.

Andris died at age 92 in 1726. He was buried in the Gloria Dei churchyard, just steps from where the parish hall stands today. His gravestone was still standing in 1877, though the inscription was so severely weathered that it was misidentified. Gertrude was buried beside him in 1738, along with four unnamed children. Two of his descendants, the children of Solomon and Rebecca Supplee, were buried in an adjacent plot in 1801.

## THE CHILDREN OF ANDRIS AND ANNEKE

Andris and Gertrude do not appear to have had any children. With Anneke, he had five known children:

1. Margaret b. 1682 in New York City; m. 1) Peter Keyser in 1700 in Germantown, 2) Michael Eccard c. 1724.
2. Ann b. after 1682; m. Charles Yocum.
3. Andrew b. abt. 1685 in Germantown; m. 1) Anna Stackhouse, 2) Deborah Thomas c. 1717.
4. Bartholomew b. before 1688; m. Mary Magdaniels in 1718 in New Jersey.
5. Jacob b. after 1688; m. Elizabeth VanZandt Enoch.

Andrew Supplee (his spelling) was born about 1685 or 1686 in Germantown. His father Andris bought real estate in Upper Merion Township, then in Philadelphia County but now in Montgomery County, in March 1707 and July 1708 – in all 150 acres – to provide homesteads for his sons Andrew and Jacob. Charles Yocum sold him the first tract and Peter Yocum (Charles'

father) sold him the second; both tracts were on the Schuylkill River about 14 miles north of the City of Philadelphia. In 1904, Andrew's two lots in Upper Merion became the site of Swedes' Furnaces.

Andrew Supplee also purchased 150 acres in Norriton Township from Isaac Norris. Around 1736, Andrew moved from his Upper Merion tract to the one in Norriton. Today, this is the location of the Norris City Cemetery.

In 1739, Andrew sold 50 acres from his father's estate in Aronameck, where his step-mother Gertrude lived until she died, to John Bartram.

When he died in 1747, Andrew's remains were placed in a vault, adjoining the Supplee school house. His remains were later moved to the Norris City Cemetery. His ledger tablet gravestone, which had been badly damaged, has recently been restored. A number of other Supplee descendants are buried at Norris City Cemetery.



## ARCHAEOLOGY AT BARTRAM'S GARDEN

When Andris Souplis acquired the future site of a portion of Bartram's Garden, it was described as a parcel of "flats poplar tree and broken land." It is unknown exactly when Andris moved to this property. The exact location of his home is uncertain. Of sound mind and body, Andris died on this plantation in 1726 at the age of 92. Andris' second son, Andrew, sold a 50-acre parcel to neighbor John Bartram (1699-1777) in April 1739. Bartram was a third-generation Pennsylvania Quaker. He had a reverence for nature, and built the most varied collection of North

American plants in the world. Bartram also operated a lucrative business centered on the transatlantic transfer of plants. Botanist and taxonomist Carl Linnaeus described Bartram as the "greatest natural botanist in the world."

Today, Bartram's Garden is a 45-acre National Historic Landmark that is open to the public. It is the oldest surviving botanical garden in the U.S.

In 2014, a team of archaeologists from URS Corporation opened 74 square-meter excavation units and dug one trench in one acre of the undisturbed south meadow area a few feet from the Schuylkill River edge.

Excavations revealed artifacts dating from 1680-1720 coinciding with the period Andris occupied the land. Excavated items included a redware dish with hand-executed sgraffito (etched color layers), ceramics, Staffordshire pottery, smoking pipes, a German Rhine Valley tankard top, and a brass furniture pull. Buildings constructed during Andris' tenure were not located and could lie under later structures; debris from a few 19th century structures on the property could conceal more Souplis material. The meadow remains unflooded today.

The Souplis midden (rubble) was exposed only in Block A, within the northeast corner of the winter 2014 archaeological project area. Artifacts from this midden included the pipe bowl, a sgraffito redware pie plate and Staffordshire buff-bodied slipware. A plain piece of Delftware relating to the occupation of Andris was excavated next to Block A. The character of the deposit was decidedly domestic, containing kitchen ceramics, window glass, animal bone, furniture hardware, and smoking pipes. It is likely that this buried midden would have been located close to a house or actively used domestic structure. \*



(Above) Bartram's Garden as it appears today.  
Courtesy of Bartam's Garden.

(Inset) A plate decorated with sgraffito excavated at Bartram's Garden. This may have belonged to Andris Souplis.  
Photo by Matthew Harris, courtesy of the URS Corporation.

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The Historic Gloria Dei Preservation Corporation does not receive government funding for our operations. All of our projects and endeavors are made possible by the talent and dedication of our board of volunteers. Your support is crucial for the preservation of this irreplaceable architectural and cultural landmark. Any donation you make will help us do more to uncover hidden stories, repair this historic property and preserve this living history museum for future generations. You can make a one-time donation or become a sustainer.



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[www.preserveoldswedes.org/donate](http://www.preserveoldswedes.org/donate)

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